

Updated Response from BANT to the Which? Article – 18 January 2012

In response to the recent Which? article BANT assures the public that it is completely outside the BANT Code of Practice to advise a client to withhold any treatment for cancer for any period of time in order to follow a nutritional approach. Were a client to be advised in such a way we would expect to receive a complaint against the practitioner

The report contains a number of inaccuracies and inconsistencies. BANT is not a regulatory body but a professional association representing 2400 practitioners who are self regulated, undertaking CPD, working to a rigorous Code of Professional Practice and with a Complaints and Disciplinary Procedure.

Currently, regulation of practitioners is offered by the Complementary and Natural Healthcare Council (CNHC), the government supported regulator for Complementary and Alternative (CAM) disciplines. Regulation is voluntary and BANT practitioners regulated by the CNHC may use the term CNHC Registered.

We have looked carefully at the transcripts provided by *WHICH?*, alleging that a practitioner recommends a client refrain from pursuing cancer treatment for a period of time rather just follow a change in diet. Whilst the information could have been better presented we have found no evidence in the transcripts that the practitioner directly made this recommendation, and are thus unable to agree with this finding. The practitioner made it quite clear that the client's oncologist must be involved and that the client should refer the suggestions to them to seek their opinion and agreement.

Furthermore we propose that this report is heavily biased on the grounds of:-

- a) Fundamental differences of opinion between dietary guidelines outlined in the Manual of Dietetics (2007) and those that Nutritional Therapy promotes.
- b) At least two of the panellists are well known detractors of Nutritional Therapy
- c) There was no attempt to have representation for Nutritional Therapy on the panel and thus no attempt to allow discussion or understanding of the Nutritional Therapy process. This can only lead to a conclusion that it was intended that Nutritional Therapy would be seen to be an apparent fail.

We suggest that the definition of 'dangerous fail' is very loose and have found several examples in the report of where the expert panel appear to have clearly misrepresented or misinterpreted the contents. We cannot agree with the findings and do not see or agree with the use of the term 'dangerous fails' even using the panel's loose definition.

We refute the outcome of cases where supposed 'dangerous fails' were deemed to have arisen on the grounds of failure to recommend contact with the client's GP. The transcripts clearly document that the client stated either they were not willing for their GP to be contacted or that they were disinclined to give details as they were either in the process of changing their GP, or were considering doing so and were not keen for this action to occur.

In these instances, practitioners would still want to provide the best possible advice regardless. If a client refuses to provide GP contact or refuses to allow the practitioner to contact the GP then that should be noted in the case notes and the reason given. In some cases practitioners may refuse to work with a client without that permission.

Further inconsistencies occur in the report resulting in what we suggest is a flawed and inaccurate report. BANT Council would have welcomed the opportunity to be part of a genuine review of the effectiveness of Nutritional Therapy, and even so, whilst unfairly denigrated, are willing to learn from this unpleasant experience and further improve and enhance the already excellent service they give to the public.